

Board Meeting

October 19, 2020



A Chronology of Events Related to the 2020-21 HCS Re-Opening Plan

August 4, 2020

The Horry County Board of Education unanimously approves the “2020-21 HCS Re-Opening Plan” as presented by Dr. Maxey and staff. As noted on page 2 of the “Re-Opening Plan,” the fluid nature of the pandemic means that adjustments to the District’s “Re-Opening Plan” may need to occur should more information become available: *“Our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continue to evolve, and our protocols and plans will be updated as appropriate and as more information becomes available.”*

August 10, 2020

South Carolina Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman notifies Dr. Maxey that the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) approved the “2020-21 HCS Re-Opening Plan.” Superintendent Spearman states:


“The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is approving Horry County Schools’ reopening plan, contingent upon the district and the SCDE reevaluating the district’s in-person option every two weeks, beginning with the district’s official start date. In light of the fluid nature surrounding the coronavirus, we ask that you update the agency should your operational plans change by emailing reopen@ed.sc.gov.”

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August 31, 2020

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) issues the first “Disease Activity by County” report that affects operations for Horry County Schools. Horry County disease spread activity is classified as **medium**. HCS brick-and-mortar schools will begin school on Tuesday, September 8th operating under the hybrid instructional model. https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/COVID19-Recent_Disease_Activity_8_31_2020.pdf

In this report and subsequent reports, SCDHEC makes the following statement:



Recent Disease Activity, by County
As of 8.31.2020

CDC recommends that all decisions about implementing school-based strategies should be made locally, in collaboration with local health officials who can help determine the level of transmission in the community. DHEC is providing this county-level data about disease transmission to support decision-making at the local level. It is not meant to be a stand-alone document.

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September 7, 2020

SCDHEC issues the “Disease Activity by County” report for Schools and Childcare Centers. Horry County disease spread activity is classified as **medium**. HCS brick-and-mortar schools will operate under the hybrid instructional model. https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/RecentDiseaseActivity9_7_2020.pdf

September 8, 2020

On the Tuesday after Labor Day, HCS begins the first day of the 2020-21 school year.

September 14, 2020

SCDHEC issues the “Disease Activity by County” report for Schools and Childcare Centers. Horry County disease spread activity is classified as **medium**. HCS brick-and-mortar schools continue operating under the hybrid instructional model. https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/RecentDiseaseActivity9_14_2020.pdf

September 16, 2020

South Carolina Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman issues a memorandum titled, “Face to Face Instruction and Notification of Changes in School Operational Status.”

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In her memorandum, Superintendent Spearman states:

“Many have expressed concern over the high rate of virus spread in some counties as defined weekly by South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. While these reports are important decision making tools, we cannot make all operational decisions based on any one document.

Please also consider parental choice of face to face and virtual learning environments, faculty and staff availability, and personal protective equipment and supplies. Districts operating face to face in high spread areas have shown how to do this successfully by strictly following the guidance and safety precautions put forth by public health experts. As you consider this request, I encourage you to call on me and the South Carolina Department of Education to assist you. The agency is willing and able to support you by providing the resources needed.”

September 21, 2020

SCDHEC issues the “Disease Activity by County” report for Schools and Childcare Centers. Horry County disease spread activity is classified as **medium**. HCS brick-and-mortar schools continue operating under the hybrid instructional model. https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/COVID19-Recent_Disease_Activity_9_21_2020.pdf

A Chronology of Events Related to the 2020-21 HCS Re-Opening Plan

September 23, 2020

Per the terms of the SCDE's August 10th approval of the "2020-21 HCS Re-Opening Plan," which requires a re-evaluation of the District's in-person option every two weeks, Deputy South Carolina Superintendent David Mathis holds a telephone conference with Dr. Maxey, Ms. Myrick, and Ms. Allen, to review the District's current in-person offering. Dr. Mathis verbally confirms that HCS is in compliance with the terms of the SDE's approval.

September 28, 2020

SCDHEC announces that it will begin releasing the "Disease Activity by County" report for Schools and Childcare Centers on Thursdays instead of Mondays.

October 1, 2020

SCDHEC issues the "Disease Activity by County" report for Schools and Childcare Centers. Horry County disease spread activity is classified as **medium**. HCS brick-and-mortar schools continue operating under the hybrid instructional model. https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/COVID19-Recent_Disease_Activity_10_1_2020.pdf

October 5, 2020

Dr. Maxey announces at the Board of Education meeting that the District has developed the HCS COVID-19 Case Dashboard which reports SCDHEC confirmed positive test results for both staff and students at all HCS locations. The dashboard provides the District with a local datapoint based upon SCDHEC-confirmed data.

A Chronology of Events Related to the 2020-21 HCS Re-Opening Plan

October 8, 2020

SCDHEC issues the “Disease Activity by County” report for Schools and Childcare Centers. Horry County disease spread activity is classified as **high**. HCS brick-and-mortar schools continue operating under the hybrid instructional model. https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/COVID19-Recent_Disease_Activity_10_8_2020.pdf

October 13, 2020

South Carolina Superintendent Spearman announces that \$33 million in funding will be available to provide S.C. school districts with the financial means to purchase PPE to include Plexiglass.

<https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/news-releases/south-carolina-department-of-education-funds-over-33-million-in-protective-equipment-and-supplies-for-all-school-districts/>

October 14, 2020

Per the terms of the South Carolina Department of Education’s August 10th approval of the “2020-21 HCS Re-Opening Plan,” which requires a re-evaluation of the District’s in-person option every two weeks, Deputy South Carolina Superintendent David Mathis holds a telephone conference with Dr. Maxey, Ms. Myrick, and Ms. Allen, to review the District’s current in-person offering. Dr. Mathis verbally confirms that HCS is in compliance with the terms of the SDE’s approval. Further, Dr. Mathis reaffirms that HCS will receive Plexiglass funded by the SCDE in order for the District to expand in-person offerings.

A Chronology of Events Related to the 2020-21 HCS Re-Opening Plan

October 15, 2020

SCDHEC issues the “Disease Activity by County” report for Schools and Childcare Centers. Horry County disease spread activity is classified as **high**. However, due to the low number of COVID-19 incidents directly affecting the District, HCS continues operating under the hybrid instructional model for its brick-and-mortar schools . https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/COVID19-Recent_Disease_Activity_10_15_2020.pdf

October 15, 2020

Local news media report that Ryan Brown, SCDE Chief Communications Officer, states, “In regards to Horry, we would support and encourage Horry’s decision to remain hybrid given the mitigation strategies in place and the success of other districts offering face to face instruction in similar circumstances.” Brown is also quoted as saying, “The CDC weighs the school/district’s ability to implement the five key mitigation strategies the same as the virus spread in a given area. This is important for districts to consider as they review the weekly DHEC disease activity reports.”

The CDC’s five key mitigation factors for schools are as follows:

- Consistent and correct use of masks
- Social distancing to the largest extent possible
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Contact tracing in collaboration with local health department <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/indicators.html>

Recommendation That The Board of Education Approve the Following:

- 1) the utilization of the HCS Case Dashboard as an additional local datapoint for determining the instructional model to be used by individual District brick-and-mortar schools,**
- 2) the use of any local datapoints which may be developed or become available in the future,**
- 3) the implementation of the hybrid instructional model for all District brick-and-mortar schools, effective October 19, 2020, until the District is able to return all brick-and-mortar schools safely to five-day, face-to-face instruction,**
- 4) the provision of a minimum of five calendar days' notice to parents before a change in instructional model unless an emergency at an individual brick-and-mortar school warrants an immediate change of that individual brick-and-mortar school's schedule, and**
- 5) re-affirm the premise, as previously stated in the "2020-21 HCS Re-Opening Plan," that our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continue to evolve, and our protocols and plans will be updated as appropriate and as more information becomes available.**